



# News Release

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## **Henderson Inlet commercial shellfish area gains 100 more acres**

*Water quality improvement leads to upgrading classification*

**OLYMPIA** — The state Department of Health announced today an upgrade of 100 acres of commercial shellfish beds in Henderson Inlet because of improving water quality. This adds to the 240 acres in that area that were upgraded in 2010.

[Henderson Inlet](#) is one of five inlets that form the southern end of Puget Sound. It's located between Budd Inlet on the west and Nisqually Reach on the east. The five-mile long inlet is fed by a 30,000-acre watershed. Woodland and Woodard creeks are the largest of the [five main tributaries to Henderson Inlet](#).

Declining water quality in Henderson Inlet led to several downgrades in shellfish classification between 1984 and 2005. The [southern part of the bay](#) remains closed to harvesting due to higher bacteria levels.

“Thurston County, city of Lacey, shellfish growers, and thousands of property owners came together to make a difference, and we can all take pride in the results,” said Jerrod Davis, director of the department’s Office of Shellfish & Water Protection.

Thurston County created a watershed protection area in Henderson Inlet to improve septic operation and maintenance with a goal of reducing human sources of bacteria. The Henderson Inlet Shellfish Protection District, which the county formed in 2001, contacted area residents to educate them about how livestock and pets can cause water quality problems.

“This is good news for all of us who care about water quality in the South Sound,” said Sandra Romero, chair of the Thurston County Board of Health. “Many thanks to residents of the Henderson Inlet watershed, and especially to the stakeholders group for their hard work on cutting pollution that goes into the inlet.”

— More —

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The Department of Health is responsible for the safety of commercial shellfish harvested in the state. The department's Office of Shellfish and Water Protection uses national standards to classify all commercial shellfish harvesting areas.

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